

Offer vs. Serve (OVS) Common Errors

- **Full servings of both fruits and vegetables are indicated on production records as prepared for every student when OVS is in place?**
 - SFAs must plan meals in the NSLP and SBP to meet all meal requirements and provide required amounts of food for all students. Menu planners should take into account participation and selection trends using food production records to determine what and how much food to offer students. Careful menu planning will ensure that students have access to all the required food components for the reimbursable meal and minimize food waste. If trends indicate that students only take $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit or vegetable than the FSD does not need to prepare $\frac{3}{4}$ cup to 1 cup of every fruit and vegetable for each student.
- **Requiring student to take a milk when they already have the 3 components on their tray.**
 - Milk is not a required component in OVS for a reimbursable meal, however it must be available for students to choose from.
 - Water must be made available to students during meal service, however program operators are not to promote or offer water or any other beverage as an alternative selection to fluid milk throughout the food service area.
- **Grab and go items do not give the opportunity to take all components.**
 - Grab and Go items, such as pre-packaged salads, must include all components. If not, students must have the opportunity to select additional components if desired.
 - Pre-packaged salads at the high school level must include 2 oz. whole grain rich equivalent to meet the meal pattern or have other options available (i.e. crackers, breadsticks, etc.).
- **Requiring students to take the entrée.**
 - Under OVS, entrees are not required components. Students are only required to take $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fruit or vegetable and two other full components.
- **Not counting potatoes as a vegetables. Making students select another fruit or vegetable if they have potatoes.**
 - A potato is considered a starchy vegetable and counts as a vegetable component, so the student is not required to select an additional fruit or vegetable if they have at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of a potato item on their tray.
- **Not including all required vegetable sub-groups in prepackaged meals.**
 - Each of the vegetable subgroups must be available to all children in at least the minimum amounts during the week. For example, if the required dark green vegetable subgroup is offered in one food item/entree and the beans/peas subgroup is offered in a different food item/entrée on the same day, and the

student can only pick one, the school must provide another opportunity to select either dark green vegetables or beans/peas later in the week in order to prevent a subgroup conflict.

- **Crediting ½ cup leafy greens as ½ cup vegetable.**
 - Leafy salad greens credit at half the volume served, which is consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. For example, ½ cup of romaine lettuce counts as ¼ cup of vegetable. The food production record needs to reflect the serving size.
- **Crediting 1 oz of meat or 1 oz grain as a component for grades 9-12 when the component is split between two food items (spaghetti and dinner roll).**
 - A menu planner may split a component into multiple items. For example, a K-5 school offers 2 ounce equivalents of grains: spaghetti (1 oz eq) with a dinner roll (1 oz eq). Since the minimum daily grains requirement for grades K-5 is only 1 oz eq, the student may take either the dinner roll (1 oz eq) or the spaghetti (1 oz eq) and count as meeting the grains component under OVS. This also applies to the meat/meat alternate component. In grades 9-12, since the daily minimum is 2 oz eq, students must select at least 2 oz eq of grains or meat/meat alternate to count toward these components.
- **Making younger children take all items instead of giving them a choice or teachers telling the student or server to put item on student tray so they can try it.**
 - Offer vs. Serve is a requirement in the NSLP for senior high schools, and is an option for lower grade schools. If a school chooses to implement OVS for lower grades as well, all the required food components and quantities must be offered and students are allowed to decline 2 of the 5 required food components, but must select at least ½ cup fruit or vegetable. Under OVS it's up to the student to determine which components to decline (i.e. staff should not be telling students to go back and get a milk.) If a student has enough components to make a reimbursable meal it is allowable for them to take a smaller portion of an additional food item to try.
- **Asking students if they want white milk or chocolate milk and then seeing a lot of milk wasted.**
 - Offering milk is a requirement of the National School Lunch Program, however students are not required to take a milk to make a reimbursable meal. When staff ask students if they want white or chocolate, it's implying they must take it. Simply ask them if they would like a milk.